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SUBJECT: ANC, IFP, AND COPE BLAME EACH OTHER FOR RECENT KZN VIOLENCE

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¶1. (SBU) Summary. The recent spate of violence in KwaZulu Natal (KZN) may be politically motivated but it is too soon to tell. Defeated political parties in KZN are still smarting from major losses in the province during the recent national election and may be unfairly placing the blame on the African National Congress (ANC). End Summary.

IFP and ANC Clash

¶2. (SBU) Thembinkosi Malunga, an ANC councilor in the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)-led Umzinyathi District Municipality (Dundee), was killed near his party's office in Greystown on June 17. Local media reported that Malunga's murder may have been carried out by the IFP in retaliation for the murder of Umvoti (Greystown) Municipality councilor Ntuthuko Ngcobo, who was ambushed on his way home two weeks ago. Local Police Spokesperson Henry Budhram said the motive for the killing is not yet known, but police are investigating and following important leads. Local ANC leader Philani Mavundla told local media that his party is not surprised by the killing as it happened soon after Ngcobo's funeral. 'It is clear that Malunga's killing was a revenge attack,' said Mavundla. Mayor of the IFP-led Umvoti Municipality Petros Ngubane said that Ngcobo was murdered because he had refused to defect to the ANC. Ngubane alleged that the ANC has been on a campaign to buy off IFP councilors so that the ANC can take control of the municipality. IFP National Organizer and parliamentarian Albert Mncwango denied the allegation and said that the IFP will allow the police to make their investigations in both the killings and will not point fingers until the investigations are complete and suspects arrested. Tensions remain high in Greystown and area leaders have called on the police to monitor the situation. ANC Provincial Spokesperson Nomfundo Mcetshwa told the Pol/Econ Assistant that the ANC is concerned about the situation in Greystown and its top leadership will meet this week to discuss the situation.

ANC and Congress of the People (COPE) Clash

¶3. (U) Police are monitoring Glebelands Hostel in a township outside Durban after an ANC gathering on June 6 turned violent. Several people were wounded when police fired tear gas, rubber bullets, and stun grenades to disperse the crowd.

ANC chairman of eThekweni region said the protest at the hostel was not a political event, but had been staged by residents demonstrating against crime. COPE provincial secretary Philip Mhlongo, however, said that the incident was indeed political in nature and that the attack at Glebelands was 'clearly targeting COPE.' A COPE member who was shot alleged that an assassin had been hired by the ANC to kill him. The man is reported to have opened fire in self-defense and injured one of his attackers in the knee and shoulder. Interim KZN ANC Chairperson Sihle Zikalala denied any involvement in the shooting, and police could not link the shooting to political intolerance.

¶4. (SBU) P/E Assistant witnessed the Glebelands incident and reports that tensions began to flare when Zuma t-shirt-clad ANC members who brandished traditional weapons prevented COPE Parliamentary Leader Mvume Dandala and other COPE provincial leaders from entering the hostel to meet with COPE members. Dandala and his delegation were forced to cancel their meeting at the hostel and instead met with police and ANC leaders at a police station to discuss the situation. COPE provincial Secretary Phillip Mhlongo told the Pol/Econ Assistant that ANC leaders had not shown up for the scheduled meeting at the hostel as planned. Mhlongo accused ANC members in the hostel of attacking and expelling COPE members from the residence. Mhlongo also told the Pol/Econ Assistant that several COPE members at the hostel have been attacked by ANC members since the April 22 general election. Mhlongo also said one of their female members at the hostel was assaulted by ANC members and forced to parade naked around the hostel. Mhlongo further revealed that COPE had received a tip from the local police intelligence unit warning them that ANC members might be hiding weapons at the hostel. In a statement released by COPE on June 6, Mhlongo called on President Zuma to intervene and call on ANC members in Glebelands hostel to stop attacking COPE members.

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Mhlongo also threatened that should attacks on their members not cease, they will be forced to defend themselves against ANC members.

ANC Member Killed

¶5. (SBU) ANC member and school teacher Ntombi Busisiwe Simelane was killed in her home in Nongoma on June 9, reported ANC Provincial Secretary Sihle Zikalala to Pol/Econ Assistant. The ANC announced in a press statement that another party member, Bafanyana Seme, is in critical condition after being shot during a spate of attacks in Nongoma on June 9. IFP Provincial Secretary Bonginkosi Buthelezi, however, told a national radio station on June 10 that Simelane was in fact a member of IFP and criticized the ANC for claiming the deceased as its member. It is not clear at this point to which, if any, political party she belonged.

¶6. (U) Police spokesperson and Superintendent Jay Naicker confirmed the attacks in Nongoma but said the motives for the attacks are still unknown. Naicker noted that police are, in fact, investigating one murder and two attempted murders. In a media statement, the ANC noted that these attacks came soon after the killing of its Greystown councilor. 'We are now convinced that our members are under attack from unscrupulous individuals who are not pleased with the inroads the ANC has made in 'no go areas' in KZN.'

Comment

¶7. (SBU) IFP and COPE members are still smarting from their losses to the ANC in KZN during the recent election and may be exaggerating the extent to which ANC is responsible for the recent violence. None of the Consulate's contacts can confirm any intention on the part of the ANC to instigate violence against any political parties.

SYKES